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ABSTRACT

The Inter-American Congress on Educational Administration, which held its first meeting in Brasilia, Brazil, in December 1979, is a privately created international organization sponsored by several national educational organizations. The congress is intended as a forum for the cooperative study of educational administration by professionals throughout the Western hemisphere. The first meeting took as its theme the relationship of educational policies and administrative systems to a nation's economic, political, and cultural context. Special emphasis was placed on educational policies directed at rural and vocational concerns, and at needs for higher education. This paper, presenting the address opening the first meeting of the congress, provides an introduction to these themes and stresses the needs for international cooperation and for recognition of the unique nature of each country's situation. It is argued that the mere transportation of educational technology from one country to another is insufficient. (Author/PGD)

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I[re] CONFÉRENCE INTER-AMÉRICAINE DE L'ADMINISTRATION DE L'ÉDUCATION

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EDUCATION: ITS POLICIES AND ADMINISTRATION, PRESENT SITUATION AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

by

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Announcement made by Dr. Benno Sander, Representative of the Organization of American States in Brazil and President of the National Association of Educational Administration Professionals (ANPAE), at the Solemn Opening Session of the 1st Inter-American Congress on Educational Administration.

EDUCATION: ITS POLICIES AND ADMINISTRATION, PRESENT SITUATION AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

Benno Sander

The countries of the inter-american system go through a process of transformation without precedent in all of the sectors and areas of knowledge. Manufacture in industrial scale surpasses agriculture as a principal economic activity. The explosive aggravation of the international energy crisis demands a reclassification of national priorities. The emergence of new independent nations in the Caribbean Islands sets a new political pace for inter-american relations. The awareness of the importance and the necessities to perfect democratic institutions in the Americas is expanded. The development of the communications system brings the countries closer together and promotes the debates over the vital problems of the hemisphere.

These economic and political transformations have profound implications for the social sciences in general and for education in particular. As a matter of fact, the ever changing realities in all of the social sectors have demanded institutions and leaders capable of efficiently meeting the challenges which follow the transformation of the region. It is precisely within this ever evolving context that the educational institution and its directors find their great challenge, their untransferable mission. It is precisely within this ever evolving context that the educational administrator is called upon to be a transactional leader, an agent of the transition between society and the State. If this task is accomplished, the educational institution will

have better conditions to evolve within the framework of economical, cultural and political changes, and thus fulfill in an efficient way, the important social function which society attributes to it.

The diagnosis of the educational situation of the countries in this hemisphere reveals that, in general, the national government plans attribute special importance to education, to the formation of educational policies and to the administration of study. In the same manner, the improvement of policies and of educational administration is the primary objective of international organisms, universities, scientific societies, foundations, councils, and professional associations all over the world.

The awareness of this importance has demanded a renewed effort on the part of educators, of politicians and administrators dedicated to the formulation of educational policies an to the establishment of administrative systems capable of translating official announcements into concrete realities.

The constant dialogue and the open communication between professionals and institutions dedicated to educational administration among the nations of this hemisphere promise to bring about new options and new perspectives on the role of education administration within diversified cultural environments. The international activities regarding technical co-operation and the comparative studies on education administration may become valuable instruments for educational development. In order to attain this goal, however, it is necessary to preserve the method of production, the cultural identity, the political

expression, in short, the national character typical of each nation. If we do not act in this manner, we run the historical risk of building schools and educational systems which would destroy cultures.

It is within this framework that the 1st Inter-American Congress on Educational Administration was conceived. It is a private undertaking, essencially technical in nature, of the National Association of Educational Administration of Brazil, in straight co-operation with the University Council for Educational Administration of the USA and other similar societies of this hemisphere. This initiative receives the full support of the Brazilian Government, of international organizations, and of a select group of universities and scientific institutions, both private and governmental. It is hoped that the Congress will be an appropriate forum for the creation of new channels of co-operation between professionals and institutions dedicated to the study aud the exercise of educational administration among the related countries of the inter-american system.

The objectives and the contents of the Congress were carefully prepared. We have come here, not as inter-governmental or governmental representatives, but as professionals of educational administration, to study the situation and the perspectives of future policies of educational administration in the Americas. The effort is inter-american. The theme is all embracing. The rich experience of the participants and the comprehensiveness of the theme provide a positive background for the study of a project having a wide basis and for the analysis of central questions related to the present situation of education, its policies and administration and their

perspectives for the next decade.

The realization of the 1st Inter-American Congress on Educational Administration represents an opportunity to study and evaluate the role of educational policies and administration within an economic, political and cultural context. The re-examination of the relation between politics, administration and education underlies all the debates. We have come here to study the relation between political formulation aud the execution of the adopted policies. We have come here to study the elaboration of educational policies because we consider the process of policy formulation to be the first decisive factor in determining the degree of its successful launching. We have come here to study the executory process because we consider the adoption of educational policies as being the first step toward a process which is only completed when it is properly implanted. In reality policies and performance should be treated technically as complemantary and integrated concepts. On one hand, politics and educational objectives would be only empty formulas unless there were a managerial system capable of substantising them in terms of concrete realizations. On the other hand, a managerial system without policies and clear objectives would not be efficient for lack of definition and direction.

Educational policies fulfill their operational imperative as long as they are conceived within the limits of the economic, cultural and political reality of the society and as long as they dispose of a proprer institutional basis for their execution. In this sense, educational policies outside of this context are doomed to fail. In the same way, an educational administration

without political direction cannot be efficient and effective.

Upon determining the contents of the Congress, certain fundamental aspects of educational policies and administration were identified as representing certain generalized concerns of the hemisphere.

The examination of recent educational developments in the countries of the inter-american system reveals that in national efforts to formulate educational policies based on the greater demands of the society, the need stands out for education directed towards rural necessities, trade schools and higher education. These national priorities have been discussed with growing clarity and objectivity in the inter-governmental and private forums of the precedent decade. The "Consensus of Santiago", promoted by the Ministers of Education of the Americas gathered in Chile in October of 1978, under the auspices of the OAS, has sanctioned the close bond between education and the working world and has defined the political lines concerning trade education for all. The meeting of the Inter-American Council on Education, Science and Culture of the OAS, which took place in Barbados in September of 1979, ratified this orientation and accentuated the importance of meeting the needs of the more destitute populations in rural areas and urban peripheries. In the same manner, the Regional Conference of the Ministers of Education and Planning, which UNESCO is presently promoting in Mexico City, returns to the debates on education for rural environments, the problems of employment and work, the education of the less favoured groups in the urban peripheries, higher education and the inter-american co-operation in the fiels of

education.

Three Main Options

The special concern which governments attribute in the present to education seeking an integrated rural development is due to the increasingly vital role which the rural environment plays in the present socio-economic context. Taking this as a starting point, it becomes necessary to formulate educational policies for the rural environment considering the necessities and the characteristics of an integrated rural development. It becomes necessary to create an educational institution which would enforce the educational policies for the rural environment. It is also necessary to establish a model of administration according to the educational institution for the rural environment. It becomes necessary, at last, to prepare programs for the initial and constant formation of administrators, who would observe the educational policies chosen and would support the role played by education administration in rural areas.

The problems concerning work and employment within the context of social development is another fundamental concern in the modern world. Politicians and educational administrators are called upon to integrate the pedagogical and social values identified in the link between education and work, and to develop policies and educational acts resulting from the necessities and the perspectives of employment. In reality, work and employment are basic conditioning elements of educational policies. The incorporation of the working world to the national policies of education promise to give to the educational system its true

social function. Since the educational administrator fulfills an essential and strategic role in the articulation between education, work and employment, the implications for his initial and permanent formation are obvious. It is necessary to start out with a correct vision of the working world in order to formulate educational policies. It is necessary to start out with legitimate educational policies to establish an institutional solution capable of offering trade education for all. It is necessary to start out with an appropriate institutional solution for the definition of an efficient model of educational administration. It is necessary to start out, at last, with an efficient model of educational administration in order to set up a program of preparation for educational administrators capable of managing educational institutions specialized in trades.

Not less important is the debate on the situation and the perspectives for university policies and administration. The fundamental responsibilities of the university, in view of the demands of social development and the democratization of education, require clear educational policies for higher studies. This definition of policies will offer better conditions for the delimitation of the field of university administration. The debates on university administration vary between a pedagogical, a public administration and a business approach. The lack of orientation in university administration seems to come from the very indefinition of the mission of the university in the modern world. While the goals, the objectives, the educational policies for higher education remain undefined, the university will not have conditions to adopt an efficient model of administration. 10

Inter-American Co-Operation

Inter-american co-operation is the underlying theme for all the activities of the 1st Inter-American Congress on Educational Administration. This inter-american co-operation gains special importance since this Congress was conceived to be an appropriate forum for a new beginning in the field of comparative educational administration. In this sense, it becomes necessary to examine the philosophical orientation, the theoric references and the methodological instruments of inter-american technical co-operation and comparative education.

Historically, inter-american relations were characterized by technical assistance both bilaterally and multilaterally. The awareness of this assistance, promoting the cultural dependence among nations, has been gradually replaced by technical co-operation, more concerned with general solutions applicable to different realities. Even so, there is still a concern for the utilization of international formulas as models in the solution of national problems.

In reality, technical co-operation and comparative education have been instruments of selective cultural assistance through the transplant of formulas and solutions from one country to another. The limitation of this approach lies in the lack of knowledge of the national character peculiar to each country which forms the educational system. The awareness of this limitation has steadily demanded a more sociological dimension in technical co-operation and comparative education, a dimension which utilizes principles and general rules charged with power of foresight. Nevertheless, in several cases, the notion of 11

national character surpassed the universal models and the concern over classical taximonies of comparison. Today, there is a growing conviction that the most appropriate approach to technical co-operation is that which is dedicated to the study and the solution of problems within their own economic, cultural and political contexts.

The evaluation of developments achieved should lead us to re-examine the purpose of inter-american technical co-operation and of the studies on comparative education, as well as the utilization of its knowledge. It is necessary to verify the extent to which comparative studies to the formulators of educational policies and to the educational administrators in general is useful. It is necessary to evaluate how much comparative education can antecipate efficiently the results of the adopted political decisions. It is necessary to appraise the extent to which technical co-operation and comparative education are viable ways toward the realization of an inter--american and universal community. It is necessary to check the extent to which educational transferences from one country to another are causes of progress or educational regressions in less developped countries.

These and other preoccupations will be the object of study of the participants of the 1st Inter-American Congress on Educational Administration. The event should not become only an opportunity to buy and sell solutions, to import and export educational technologies doomed to widen the gap between donors and receptors. On the contrary, the event should become one more opportunity to make educators of this hemisphere aware that the educational project of each country is unique, and as

such, can only be compared with itself, and be examined only within its own economic, cultural, and political context, inserted, naturally, within an inter-american and international reality. This awareness is particularly important in order to achieve one of the main objectives of this Congress- "the establishment of mechanisms of interchange and association which permit the permanent co-operation between professionals and institutions dedicated to the administration of education in the countries belonging to the inter-american system." This objective is a result of the renewed aspirations and recommendations of scientific associations and inter-governmental organisms, such as the OAS and UNESCO. Numerous suggestions have been made by educators and institutions in the sense of studying the possibility of establishing an inter-american society for the administration of education, which would, while searching for the co-operation between nations in the field of educational administration, preserve the cultural autonomy, the economic functionalism and the political identity of each particular national system of education.

I believe the time has come to render this ideal concrete. The field has been prepared for a long time. The seed has been cast and I am sure that it has landed in good earth, yielding abundant fruit in the future. If it is so, the 1st Inter-American Congress on Educational Administration will be a step beyond, a new dawn, a transcendental mark in the development of comparative educational administration in the Americas.